

SALT PRODUCTION IN THE TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS AND UNITED STATES TARIFF POLICY

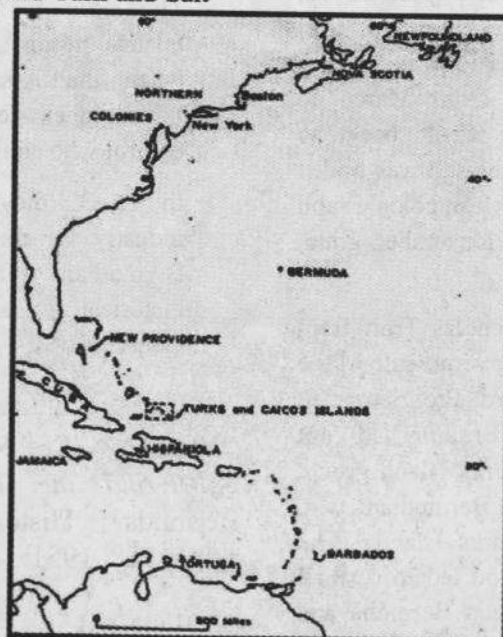
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The Turks and Caicos Islands, Figure 1, have been the site of numerous battles because they straddle the Turks Island Passage which allows passage to the inner portions of the Caribbean. The Turks Islands include Grand Turk and Salt

Key along with a number of smaller islands, while in the Caicos chain are: South, East, Grand and North Caicos, then Providenciales and West Caicos.



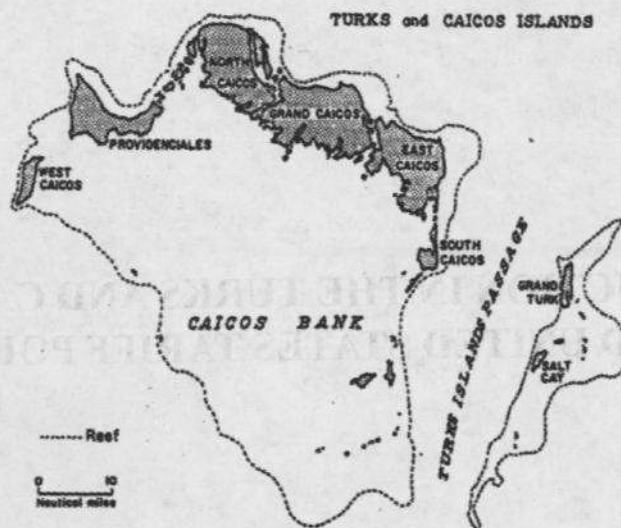


Figure 1. Location of Turks and Caicos islands in relation to continental North America and islands of the Turks and Caicos.

Although first reported by Ponce de Leon in 1512, this island group was generally ignored until 1667 when they were rediscovered by the Governor of South Carolina and considered a part of the Bahamas. Twelve years later, in 1678, seamen from Bermuda started going regularly to rake salt from March to November and transport it back to Bermuda. From there the salt was traded to the British North American colonies and, occasionally, to England for lumber, grain, or salted fish.

Meanwhile, in 1692 Nicholas Trott from Bermuda accepted the Governorship of the Bahamas from the Lord Proprietors in England. Although Britain had not officially claimed the Turks Island group, Trott levied taxes on the Bermudians who went to rake salt on Turks Island. The unpopularity of this action led to a small war in 1701-1705 between Bermuda and the Bahamas whose new governor, Elias Haskett, tried to condemn and confiscate ships that were plying the salt trade without Bahamian licenses. This "war"

ended in 1705 when Governor Bennet of Bermuda promised to be more strict in issuing letters of mark for the transport of salt.¹

The issue of authority over the Turks Islands became inflamed again in 1734 when the Assembly of the Bahamas Islands again levied taxes and started to control who could rake salt.²

In effect, they wanted to protect the industry for themselves and prevent the Bermudians from coming to their historical salt raking grounds. Consequently, in 1736 Governor

¹WILLIAM SEARS ZUILL, *Bermuda, Salt, and the Turks Islands*. The Bermuda Historical Quarterly 8, p.162-168, 1951.

²COLONIAL OFFICE PAPERS. AMERICA AND THE WEST INDIES, p. 393, Item 500, Public Record Office, London, H. M. Stationery Office, 1735.

Fitzwilliam wrote to the Council of Trade and Plantations requesting the addition of the Turks Islands to H. M. Dominions (The Bahamas). He based this request on the need to stop the smuggling of salt by Bermudians who did not pay taxes on the salt and hence hurt British trade.

The continuing interest by the French and Spanish in the islands was also of concern.³ The Spanish in 1710 attacked the islands, and the French in 1753 and again in 1764 until in 1766 the Turks and Caicos Islands were formally acknowledged to be a part of the Bahamas.⁴ Finally, in 1764 Andrew Symmer was appointed Crown Agent and the Turks Islands declared to belong to Great Britain⁵. However, it wasn't until 1766 that Symmer was officially appointed agent for the islands and later that year a salary was agreed upon for him.⁶

³COLONIAL OFFICE PAPERS. AMERICA AND THE WEST INDIES, p. 326, Item 454, Public Record Office, London, H. M. Stationery Office, 1736.

⁴THEODOOR DE BOOY, *The Turks and Caicos Islands, British West Indies*, Geographical Review 6, p. 37-51, 1918.

⁵COLONIAL OFFICE PAPERS: AMERICA AND THE WEST INDIES, Vol 23 No. 7, p. 224, Public Record Office, London, H. M. Stationery Office, 1764.

⁶JOURNAL OF THE COMMISSIONERS FOR TRADE AND PLANTATIONS, Vol. 73, p.331-333, Public Record Office, London, H. M. Stationery Office, 1766.

It was Symmer who brought order to salt making on the Turks Islands. Although he exceeded his official authority, he immediately established regulations for the production of salt, the head right system⁷ for the salt rakers, established salt pan reserves for the Crown, placed a ½ penny per bushel tax on salt to defray civil expenses, and saw to the maintenance and improvements of the salt pans.^{8, 9} These regulations were finally approved by the Commission of Trade and Plantations with His Majesty's approval in 1781, 14 years later.

The next major change in salt production occurred in 1845 when the salt pans changed from the headright system to leasehold. It was argued that the

⁷The head right system allotted to each adult on the 10 of February each year a share of the salt production from two-thirds of the salt ponds. Children were measured and estimated what their height would be and given so many tenths a share of what they would have received as adults. The other share of the ponds was reserved for the common government. In 1837, the Bahamian government changed this slightly so that any child over 12 received a full share while those under a half share. F. H. WATKINS, *Colonial Reports-Miscellaneous. No. 56. Turks and Caicos Islands. Report on the Salt Industry.* pp. 1-42. Darling & Son, Ltd. London, England, 1908.

⁸COLONIAL OFFICE PAPERS: AMERICA AND THE WEST INDIES, Vol. 23 No.7, p. 254, Public Record Office, London, H. M. Stationery Office, 1767.

⁹Ibid., p.258.

leasehold system would improve production and encourage efficiency in salt production. Another major change was the governance of the islands. For years the Turks Islanders had requested separation from the Bahamas citing unfair practices. Among these were the failure of the Bahamian government to return funds to the Turks Islands, the requirement that all ships put into Nassau both going and coming, and the loss of time in this because of the distances between Nassau, Bahamas and Grand Turk Island. Finally the request was granted in 1848⁷. Thus from 1848 until 1874, the islands were allowed to govern themselves under the supervision of the Governor of Jamaica.¹⁰

¹⁰DE BOOY. Op. Cit., p. 39.

The advantages of this change in government were that all duties were available to the Turks Islands for improvement of their salt pans, towns, piers, etc. For example, animal power was introduced to carry the raked salt to the warehouses, salt pans were opened and then closed on West Caicos, and finally the salt pans were converted to freehold from the leasehold (1873) - again in the hopes of improving production. During this time, however, the frequent hurricanes and heavy rainy seasons were disastrous to salt production.⁷

Because of poor salt production, in 1874 the islands became a dependency of Jamaica which took an interest in the islands and introduced machinery to grind salt for the fishing industry. To maintain the salt pans, an ordinance was passed in 1879 imposing a maintenance tax¹¹, and in 1907 an ordinance was passed which reduced the statutory value of a bushel of salt from 3.5 pence per bushel to 2 pence per bushel hoping that this reduced taxation would revive the industry⁷.

Another rescue attempt occurred in 1952 when The Turks Island Salt Company was formed by the government. It bought all of the salt operations and salt pans and maintained salt raking on Grand Turk, Salt Cay, and Cockburn Harbor on South Caicos¹⁰. In 1962 the Turks Islands were returned to the Bahamas, but in 1973 they became an independent Crown Colony¹¹. It was during this second period

under Bahamian rule that commercial salt production ceased on the Turks and Caicos Islands bringing an end to almost 200 years of salt raking in this region.

METHODS OF SALT PRODUCTION

Although the earliest salt rakers from Bermuda simply recovered the salt that had been produced in natural shoreline depressions, it has not been documented exactly when the development of a holding lagoon for the initial concentration of sea water or a separate crystallization pan was instituted. We do know that Symmer was instrumental in formalizing the following system by appointing three overseers to keep the ponds in good repair, limiting who could rake salt and when, and setting selling prices. In addition, Symmer appointed people to lay out the "great pond and little pond and pans". This resulted in a common inlet system, followed by a weak or number 1 pond, from there the brine flowed into the stronger or number 2 pond. From there the concentrated brine flowed either by gravity or windmills into the headright holder's crystallization pans⁷. When the salt was raked, it was stacked beside the crystallizer and allowed to drain and dry. It was then transported by wheelbarrow or slaves to the warehouse.

¹¹MCCARTA, ROBERTSON, *Greater Antilles Bermuda, Bahamas.* English

edition. pp. 99-112. Nelles Verlag. Munich, Germany, 1991.

Slavery had been introduced while Bermuda controlled the island. It lasted from about 1764 until August 1, 1834. It had started earlier as indentured servants who were indentured for 99 years and were either local Indians, white people from Great Britain, or Negroes from Africa¹². From that it evolved into slavery in 1764 as the slave trade developed to support the plantations of various nations in the Caribbean. Owners of salt pans were given money for each slave that worked in the salt pans so the actual harvesting of the salt became the work of the slaves¹³.

Symmer opened ports in the Turks and Caicos, but they were all fairly shallow, and in the twentieth century they were too shallow to allow for direct loading of the salt. Hence lighters had to be used which delayed loading and the purchase of Turks island salt became less attractive¹⁴.

It was not until 1848 that a cart and mule were added to carry the salt from the pans to the road. Also at that time, windmills (wind machines) were added which filled the pans with brine. Each windmill was equal to 24 men¹⁵. This was especially important as the islands could not support a large population due to a chronic shortage of water.

¹²M. Maddison-MacFadyen, *Toiling in the Salt Pans*, Times of the Islands, Fall 20008 (#84), pp. 77-88.

¹³Ibid. p. 77

¹⁴WATKINS, Op. Cit., p. 37-38.

¹⁵COLONIAL OFFICE PAPERS, Vol.301, No. 2 June 30, 1849 Census Report, Public Record Office, London, H. M. Stationery Office, 1849 .

THE TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS IN 1861

By 1861 there were three primary locations for salt production. Grand Turk which is 11.3 km long by 2.4 to 3.2 km wide and contained 120 acres of salinas yielding 4,000 bushels per acre annually. Grand Turk also contains the main city in the Turks Island group, Cockburn Town near which the salinas were located. The small island of Salt Cay is only about 13 square km, but it had 150 acres of salinas yielding 5,000 bushels per acre in 1861. The other main salt producer was South Caicos which is about the size of Grand Turk Island. It also had approximately 120 acres of salinas producing about 4,00 bushels of salt per acre¹⁶.

¹⁶ ANDREW G CAROTHERS, *Letter of The Secretary of State Transmitting a Report on the Commercial Relations of the United States with Foreign Nations for the Year Ending September 30, 1861*. pp. 61-62. UNITED STATE SENATE, 37th Congress, 2d Session, Ex. Doc. Washington, D C. Government Printing Office, 1862.

IMPORTATION OF TURKS AND CAICOS SALT

Records of the production of salt in the Turks Islands are often sketchy, but good documentation on the exportation to the United States does exist from the late 18th century.

These data are shown in Fig. 2. The first dip resulted from the lifting of salt import tariffs from 1807 to 1813. The majority of the subsequent dips in exports to the United States reflect severe rains or hurricanes damaging salt production.

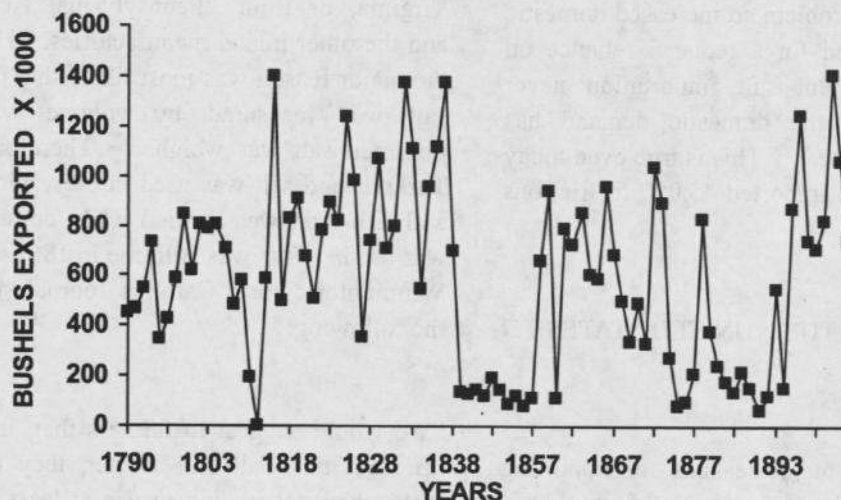


Figure 2. Turks and Caicos exports to the United States from 1790-1910.

In fact, based on its exposed location in the Caribbean and Atlantic Ocean, weather was a major factor in determining the growth and survival of salt manufacturing in the Turks Islands in the twentieth century.

In general, almost 90% of the salt produced in the islands was exported to the United States. This accounted for between 12 and 30% of the

salt imported into the United States until around 1840, Fig. 3. From then on, except for the period during the American Civil War, there was a steady decline in the percentage of imported salt that the Turks and Caicos Islands accounted for. Most of this decline resulted from decreased production in the islands because salt importation continued in the United States.



Figure 3. Percent of Turks and Caicos salt imported as part of total United States salt importation: 1790-1910.

Also, by the mid to late 1860's significant salt production was reaching the eastern industrial markets from Michigan and even California by the 1870's. With the completion of the transcontinental railroad, 1869, transportation of salt from inland centers of production such as Michigan, or from the west coast, California, was no longer a problem so increased domestic production allowed for a reduced reliance on imported salt. But salt importation never really ceased as the domestic demand has always been too great. This is true even today as in 2005 the US imported 45,000 metric tons of salt¹⁷.

THE NEED FOR THE UNITED STATES TO IMPORT SALT

There were two major reasons for importing salt. Basically, domestic production could not keep up with the demand as mentioned above.

The second reason concerned the quality of the salt. It was widely believed that Turks Island salt contained special properties which made it more suitable for food preservation. In 1841, the *Journal of Commerce* noted:

"...there is no substitute for Turk's Island salt manufactured in this country, either on the shores of the Atlantic, or from the springs of the interior. None of the domestic salt will preserve provisions when exported. The salt of the interior is sufficient to keep beef and pork sweet until they reach the seaboard, but if they are to be shipped, the barrels must be repacked and copiously supplied with the

strong salt of Turk's Island "¹⁸

Part of the explanation for this preference for Turks Island salt lay in the purity of the solar salt which was undoubtedly better than the semi-purified salt from Kanawha in West Virginia, or from Pennsylvania, New York and the other inland manufactories. However, the major reason was most likely that domestic salt was measured by volume while all imported salt was weighed. Therefore, more Turks Island salt was used in preserving meats and fish than was applied when domestic salt was used. This was still true in 1862 when the Wilmington, North Carolina Journal suggested the following:

"We would suggest to farmers that, in putting up meat this Fall and Winter, they ought to make their calculation to use at least fifty per cent. more, taking the nominal bushel as a standard, than they formerly did of the Liverpool or Turk's Island salt. There is at least that much difference in weight."¹⁹

In addition, imported salt was often cheaper than domestically produced salt because salt was frequently shipped as ballast. Finally, solar salt was cheaper to produce because of the nonexistent fuel costs. During the seventeenth

¹⁸MUNSON, LILLIAN. S., *Syracuse The City that Salt Built*. p. 297. Pageant Press International Corp. New York, 1969.

¹⁹ ISABEL. M WILLIAMS and LEORA. H. MCEACHERN, *Salt, That Necessary Article*. Chapter 11, reference 12: Wilmington Journal (North Carolina) August 20, 1862. pp. 30 and 169. Private Printing, Wilmington, North Carolina, 1973.

¹⁷United Nations Data.
<http://data.un.org>.

through nineteenth centuries, there was little solar salt production in the United States. The only long- lasting successful operation was at Onondaga, New York which used solar evaporation to partially concentrate the brine. Even here, however, it was necessary to have a series of covers to protect the evaporators during rain and the winter months.

One other aspect that affected New York producers and their concern with imported salt was the heavy duty and tight control the State of New York exerted over the Syracuse salt works. This even applied to the appointment of a special superintendent for the salt works¹⁵.

SALT IMPORTS INTO THE UNITED STATES AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO SALT TARIFFS

The records on the amount of salt imported into the United States can be confusing. Under the Tariff Act of 1792²⁰, the standard bushel was set at 56 pounds (25.5 kg) and remained at that level until sometime between 1840 and 1850. During that decade some of the salt was imported at a weight of 82 pounds (37.3 kg) per bushel. However, despite these official and unofficial standards, by 1831 Turks Island salt was being weighed at the Port of Philadelphia at 72.5 to 79.5 pounds (33 kg to 36 kg) per bushel¹⁸. This continued until 80 pounds per bushel became the universally accepted (if not legal) amount of salt by the 1850s.

²⁰ROBERT G. PROCTOR 1898. *Tariff Acts Passed by the Congress of the United States from 1789 to 1897*. pg. 29. Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C., 1898.

Almost from the beginning of the United States, imported salt was viewed as a significant revenue source to balance the budget, pay for westward expansion, and protect the domestic manufacturers. Table 1 lists the various tariffs placed on salt, the amounts, and the rationale, both official and indirect, for the various tariffs.²¹

As the data in Table 1 clearly show, salt was taxed initially for revenue and later in the early eighteenth century for protection of the fledgling domestic salt industry. While the first tariff was passed to pay for the Revolutionary War, by 1807 it was obvious that domestic production was not up to supplying the growing population and its needs, so the tariff was repealed. However, the War of 1812 with Great Britain again caused a need for additional revenues to the treasury, and the tariff was reinstituted. The salt tariff was so unpopular with the citizens, that the Department of the Treasury had to lobby the Congress for retention of the salt tariff to pay for the War of 1812.

²¹These data have come from numerous sources: BENTON, THOMAS H. 1839. *Documents Relating to the Trade In, and Manufacture and uses of, Salt*. UNITED STATES SENATE, 26th Congress, 1 st. Session, Document No.196. Washington, D. C. Government Printing Office. 1840; PARKER, EDWARD W, *Report of the Geological Survey Vol.17 (Part 3)*, pp. 984-998, 1896; *General Statement of Goods, Wares, and Merchandise Imported into the United States*. 1831; and ANTHONY GREGORY, *The Turks Islands Salt Trade and Industry: An Historical Economic Geography*. Unpublished Manuscript. Master of Arts Degree Thesis. University of California, Berkeley, California, 1968.

"...the average annual revenue arising from that [salt] duty is estimated at \$810,016...

If the salt tax shall be repealed, there will be a deficit in the revenue of more than \$700,000 annually, until the proceeds of the lands in the State of Mississippi and in the Alabama Territory shall be applicable to the current expenses of the Government"²²

Seeking additional revenue because the War of 1812 lasted longer than expected and was so expensive, the tariff not only was retained in 1816, but an ad valorem tax on ships carrying salt and not registered in the United States was assessed at an additional 10%.

There was considerable demand by the food, tanning, and glass making industries for cheaper salt, so there were memorials during the 1820's to repeal the tariff. One example can be found in the proceedings of the Senate Agricultural Committee²³.

²²UNITED STATES. 15th Congress, 1st Session, UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, Document No. 524, Washington, D. C., Government Printing Office, 1818.

²³UNITED STATES. 19th Congress, 1st Session, UNITED STATES SENATE, Document No. 61, Washington, D. C., Government Printing Office, 1826.

Table 1. Salt Tariffs Enacted from 1789-1910

DATE	TARIFF:1789-1860/ BUSHEL 1861-1910 PER 100 LBS.	RATIONALE
1789	6 ¢ with drawbacks for exporting salted provisions	Pay for the Revolutionary War
1790	12 ¢ + 10 % if non-U.S. vessel	Revolutionary War and frontier expansion
1797	20 ¢ + 10 % if non-U.S. vessel	Revenue
1800	Agreed to retain 1797 Act for 10 years	Revenue
1807	Removed Salt Tariff	Debt reduced
1813	20 ¢	War of 1812 and to be retained for one year after the War ended for debt reduction due to the war
1816	20 ¢ + 10% if non-U.S. vessel	War of 1812 debt
1830	15 ¢ for 18 months; then 10 ¢	Salt industry demanded a tariff; consumers did not want it; so compromised
1832	Retained 10 ¢ added 10% if non-U.S. vessel	Protection of home salt industry
1842	8 ¢ + 10 % if non-U.S. vessel	Protection of home salt industry
1861	4 ¢ bulk; 6 ¢ packaged	Tariff reduced as need for salt increased
1862	12 ¢ bulk; 18 ¢ packaged	Expenses from the Civil War
1864	18 ¢ bulk; 24 ¢ packaged; 6 ¢ ad valorem [Sic]	Protectionism and war revenue
1866	Repealed fishing bounty laws	Industry demands
1872	8 ¢ bulk; 12 ¢ packaged	Domestic needs
1883	Tariff the same, but a refund for meat and fisheries packers	Industry demands
1890	Tariff retained, but meat and fisheries exporters refunded	Industry demands
1894	No tariff	Domestic needs
1897	8 ¢ bulk; 12 ¢ packaged	Protectionism and revenue
1909	7 ¢ bulk; 11 ¢ packaged	Domestic needs
1913	No tariff	

"Now however, all the apologies for this tax...have ceased. The national debt is reduced to about its first amount, and our revenue ...have increased. What is still further objectionable, an undue portion...fall upon the middle and poorer classes...Notwithstanding the duty on salt, its manufacture on the seaboard has declined, ...and in the interior, has flourished, not from the duty, but from the small cost of the production... and the great expense of its transportation. It can be made in the interior, at a price from fifteen to fifty cents per bushel; and a duty of twenty cents would not pay its freight by land, much beyond that number of miles....The tax, therefore, appears to your committee, in every point of view injudicious..."²⁴

From this statement, it is obvious that the duty had done little to protect the American salt industry and that the greatest obstacle to growth was the high transportation costs of getting inland salt from Onondaga, New York or Kanawha, West Virginia to the coastal industrial centers. Despite this impassioned plea to reduce the tariff, it was not until 1830 that any reduction was achieved, and then only to 15 cents. The compromise was to hold the tariff at the 15 cent level for 18 months, then reduce it to 10 cents. This greatly upset the salt manufacturers in West Virginia who appealed to Congress to save the salt industry from ruin ²⁵.

Even the State legislatures sought to influence the Federal Congress by passing resolutions decrying the removal of tariffs on imported salt as the following quotation from the Massachusetts legislature so amply shows.

²⁵CAROL D. LITCHFIELD, *Salt in the Kanawha Valley 1796-1854: The Ruffner Family*, pp. 62-77 In R. JUST and U. MEISNER *Das Leben in der Saline - Arbeiter und Unternehmer*, Technisches Halloren- und Salienemuseum, Halle (Saale), Germany, 1996.

"Resolved, That the repeal of the duty on salt, and the bounty to fishing vessels...would injuriously affect the best interests of the American people, distress a large portion of our most valuable and deserving citizens, impair our national strength, and weaken us in a port most vital to our honor and influence among the nations of the earth.

Resolved That the passage of the bill now before the Senate of the United States must destroy our salt manufactories, paralyze our co-fisheries, and show that the best interests of the nation will be sacrificed, only to retard our prosperity, and to check the progress of northern industry.

Resolved, That his excellency the Governor be requested to transmit copies of these resolves to the Senators and Representatives of the Commonwealth in Congress."²⁶

However, such impassioned pleas had little effect on Congress as a whole because most of the states were salt-consuming states and not salt-producing states, for example the General Assembly of Indiana passed a resolution on February 10, 1840 in favor of repealing the duty on salt²⁷. Because of such a need for salt, the Senate recommended in 1840 that the salt tax be repealed.

²⁶ROBERT C. WINTHROP and DANIEL P. KING, *Massachusetts Legislature. Resolves of the legislature of Massachusetts concerning the duty on salt, and the bounty to fishing vessels*, UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, 26th Congress, 1st Session, Doc. No. 207, Washington, D. C., Government Printing Office, 1840.

²⁷DAVID WALLACE, *Resolution of The General Assembly of Indiana*, 26th Congress, 1st Session, UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, Doc. No. 343, Washington, D. C., Government Printing Office, 1840

"...Believing a Salt-Tax to be fundamentally wrong, and the parent of evils to the country...the free importation of foreign salt is necessary to relieve the country from the oppressions of the salt monopoly in the west... and the committee recommends the repeal of the act of July 29, 1813..."²⁸

Despite such claims of unfair competition and pleas for repeal of the duty, the tariff was not reduced for two more years when it was reduced in 1842 to 8 cents. In the Tariff Act of March 2, 1861 a double standard was approved in which the tariff was 4 cents for bulk purchases and 6 cents if the salt was packaged in barrels, sacks, or other containers. At this time, the tariff was still on the official basis of a 56 pound bushel.

²⁸THOMAS H. BENTON, *Document relating to the bill to repeal the acts laying a duty on imported salt, and granting certain fishing bounties and allowances to fishing vessels, in lieu of a drawback of the duties paid on foreign salt, and on fish exported*, 29th Congress, 1st Session, UNITED

With the start of the Civil War, however, there was a great need for additional revenues, and again as in the past, duties on imported salt were an immediate target. The duty increased 168 percent in the tariff act of 5 August 1861 to 12 cents per bushel for bulk salt, and 18 cents per bushel for any form of containerized salt. At this time, the official measure for salt was changed to 100 pounds 29. However, by 1862, salt was in such short supply because of the Civil War, that the duty was decreased to 6 cents per 100 pounds³⁰. This was reaffirmed in the first tariff act enacted by the first session of the 38th Congress in 1864³¹. However, during the second session of the 38th Congress in the Tariff Act of June 30, 1864, the duty was again increased by 300 percent to 18 cents bulk and 24 cents packaged³².

²⁹ROBERT G. PROCTOR, *Op Cit.*, p. 158, 1898.

³⁰UNITED STATES, 37th Congress, 2 nd. Session, UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, Document No. CH. 163, p. 550, Washington, D. C., Government Printing Office, 1862.

³¹UNITED STATES, 38th Congress, 1 st. Session, UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, Document No. CH. 173, p. 267, Washington, D. C., Government Printing Office, 1864.

³²ROBERT G. PROCTOR, *Op. Cit.*, p. 213, 1898.

This was designed to help the domestic economy and to obtain revenue to pay the debts incurred during the Civil War. This tariff remained in effect until 1872, even though the fishing bounty laws had been repealed in 1866³³.

In 1872, the tariff was reduced almost to the pre-war level of March, 1861³⁴. During the years after the Civil War, there was a severe depression, especially 1873-1878, which drastically affected the salt manufacturers, but despite this the need for salt was so great for the chemical industry that the reduced tariffs stayed in effect. To offset the high costs of food, in 1883 the packers of salted meat and fish were refunded the duty they had paid indirectly on the salt they used.

This decision was not without controversy, especially among the salt producing states with New York, Michigan, and California leading the way in objecting to lowering the duty. Mr Horr, Congressional Representative from Michigan, wrote an extensive pamphlet based on his testimony to a House of Representatives hearing on tariffs and their impact on domestic industries. In this he complained about the competition especially from Canada and England and her territories. He claimed that the U.S. workers were paid 30 percent more than their Canadian counterparts and therefore the tariff was essential to the protection of the domestic industry. Imported salt was so cheap because it usually came as ballast, and he objected to the free salt (Tariff Act of 1883) for the fisheries industries³⁵.

Despite this, by 1890 exporters of meats and fish were included in the refund³⁶, and in 1894

the salt duty was repealed altogether³⁷. There was an interesting twist to this repeal, however, in that if a country levied any taxes or duty on the salt exported from the United States, then the rate in effect prior to this repeal would be placed on the salt imported from the offending country.

However, the cries from the various manufacturers and the need for additional revenue were heard by Congress, and in 1897 the tariff was reinstated at the 1872 rate³⁸. The duty remained until 1909 when it was reduced by 1 cent for both bulk and packaged salt, and in 1913 the tariff was repealed once again. This was only in effect until 1930, when the depression forced a return to the old revenue-raising method of imposing tariffs on imported salt³⁹.

What impact did these various tariffs actually have on the importation of Turks Island salt? It was very little. In fact as early as 1868 in a special report on the impact of tariffs on domestic industries, the importation of Turks Island salt was used as an example of the failure of this taxation policy to stem the influx of foreign goods⁴⁰.

³³Ibid., p. 224.

³⁴Ibid., p. 252.

³⁵MR. HERR, *Salt and Lumber, Statement of Mr. Horr*, United States. 48th Congress, House Committee Hearings, Washington, D. C., Government printing Office, 1884.

³⁶ROBERT G PROCTOR., *Op. Cit.*, p. 345, 1898.

³⁷Ibid., p. 447.

³⁸Ibid., p. 523.

³⁹GREGORY, *Op. Cit.*, p. 212, 1968.

⁴⁰GEORGE WALKER, *Report of the special commission of the revenue for the year 1868*. 40th Congress, 3d session, UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, Ex. Doc. No. 16, Washington, D. C., Government Printing Office, 1869.

CONCLUSIONS

Even before the establishment of the United States of America as an independent country, the Turks and Caicos islands were a source of salt on that side of the Atlantic Ocean. After independence, 90% of the salt produced on the Turks Islands was imported into the US, and this constituted between 15 and 25 percent of the total salt imports. Because of this amount, it certainly figured in the arguments for establishing, maintaining, or increasing the tariff. However, despite the demands of the U. S. salt cartels and monopolies for protection from cheap imported salt, domestic production could not keep up with the increasing demands for salt for dietary and industrial purposes.

Restrictive local taxes, such as in New York, recessions, and the failure to modernize by the West Virginia salt producers were all major contributors to this need to import increasing amounts of salt. Unfortunately, salt production on the Turks and Caicos also failed to modernize and was severely impacted by heavy rains and/or hurricanes, so that Turks Island salt became less of a threat to domestic production and eventually ceased production altogether.

Key Words: Turks & Caicos, salt, tariffs, United States